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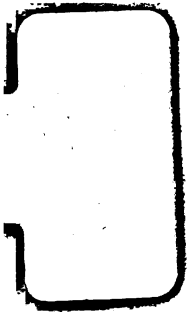


Keppler
NBI

To Prof. Calvin Thomas with the kindest regards of Emil A. C. Keppler.

Dec. 9, 1902
Columbia University.

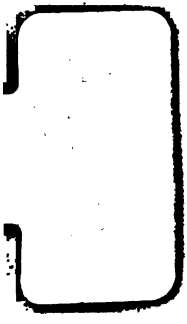
Keppler
N[illegible]

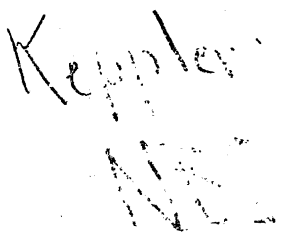
With Tom Tom and Tomahawk

By

EMIL A. C. KEPPLER.

New York
A. G. Seiler & Company
1902





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9

TUPAC AMARU.

(*Peruvian.*)

Now praise to Tupac's memory,
May with his soul be peace!
Great deeds he did for old Peru—
And died for its release.

A hundred years it is, and more,
Since he, proud Inca heir,
Gave up his life for liberty
In Cuzco's crowded square.

In awe they bowed to Spaniard law,
The conquered Indian men—
For Tupac, on his way to death,
No cheer was uttered then.

The Spaniard guard, with bayonet,
Silenced all cheering there;
But eighty thousand saints above
Cheered silently in air.

The guards with curse and taunt reviled
  The people of Peru,
They laughed alone, while strong men wept,
  At suffering Amaru.

In spite of Spaniard bayonet
  Brave Tupac stood his ground:
"I *will* be heard before I die!
  Although my foes surround.

I fought for freedom's cherished life;
  And, though this time I failed,
The cause must win, for it is just;—
  Think how ye Spaniards quailed!

Ye trembled all at freedom's call
  And thought your sun had set;
But tyrant power, although 'tis doomed,
  Victorious is as yet.

The war-cry of the Inca race:
  'We want our rights as men!'
Will set afire the Southern Sphere,
  God save ye Spaniards then!

But now to God commend my soul
  And say to all that hear:
His last prayer was for Liberty,
  For her we slew him here!"

And thus died he, the Inca heir,
  Brave Tupac Amaru.
And eighty thousand ghostly dead
  Cheered loudly for Peru.

They welcomed him as honored Chief,
  As freedom's valiant head,
They welcomed him with colors dipped,
  As the nation's greatest dead!

WAHBUK AND NOMAH.

(*Seneca.*)

The Senecas were weeping loud
  At Nomah's early death.
The sun withdrew behind a cloud,
  The wind half caught his breath.

Young Wahbuk came to kiss his bride,
  With war's success aglow;
He brushed the silent throng aside:—
  "To Nomah I would go."

The old men said: "Young man beware
  You call upon the dead!
We mourn for Nomah lying there
  Upon her funeral bed."

Then Wahbuk answered not a word,
  He laid his bow aside;
He seemed of stone, he never stirred,
  At even time he died.

The death song then, intoned by braves,
Was chanted o'er and o'er,
And hearing it the languid waves
Sobbed softly on the shore.

Upon a willow near the lake
A bird sang sweet and low;
It sang as if its heart would break
From very strength of woe.

The squaws were silent every one
From grief, o'erstrong and deep;
They, too, loved Nomah, pale and wan,
Loved her too well to weep.

And then they buried both in state
Upon the lake's dark shore;
And asked the bird and its small mate
To sing there evermore.

That prayer by Manitou was heard,
And Nomah's grave became
The holy shrine of every bird
That worthy was the name.

THE ISLES OF THE YELLOW SAND.

(*Huron.*)

O ! have you heard the story
  Of the wonderful isles of sand,
Or have you seen their glory
  As the sun rose o'er the land?

Upon their yellow beaches
  Lie grains of golden sands,
And on their shallow reaches
  The golden bulrush stands.

And trees, with gold twigs drooping,
  Stand close to a black mouthed cave,
In golden fretwork looping
  That gateway to the grave.

And horn-clad serpents, warding
  The glimmering treasure of gold,
Deal death to men according
  As their lust is strong and bold.

The winds and the waves are lining
  The eyes of the dead with gold
And mortals by their shining
  Are lured to the serpents' hold.

The bones of men lie bleaching
  On the shores of the Isles of Sand;
And nought but the eagles, screeching,
  And serpents reach that land.

How news of those Isles came hither
  No living man doth know;
Perhaps earth's thought strayed thither
  Through dreamland long ago!

By minds of mankind moulded
  The tale of the wonderful shores,
As slowly was unfolded
  As wings of bird that soars.

THE LEGEND OF MAWAHA.

(*Iroquois.*)

In shady wood, in tranquil nook,
  Through forests dim with pines,
By every rushing, babbling brook,
  Mawaha sings these lines:

"In days to come we will arise,
  In days of pain and woe—
The Iroquois are great and wise
  And brave they are, I know.

They rule the land with flint like hand,
  They win the wars they wage;
And none from coward Huron band
  Dare tempt our sachem's rage.

The lodges of the Iroquois
  Are countless as the stars,
That nightly rise above St. Croix,
  Which bears our hatchet scars.

Their council fires burn long and late,
The peace pipe oft goes round;
They learnt to love and learnt to hate,
Long ere that Huron hound.

Their sachems speak with open heart,
Their speech and tongue are straight;
When Iroquois as guest-friends part,
They covet not your mate.

Their bucks are noble, strong and kind;
In hunting swift of foot;
They build the best canoes you'll find,
And bows wherewith to shoot.

They hunt, they fish, they till the soil,
They love their wigwam's ease;—
From battles fierce and hot embroil
No warrior ever flees.

A Huron only would turn round
And double on his track!
No Iroquois was ever found
With death wound in his back!

May Manitou increase their strength,
  Respect their heartfelt cries
And kill that Huron race at length!
  The Iroquois are great and wise!"

This was an ancient, time-worn song
  Mawaha sung alway.
The shamans knew and sung it long
  Before her granther's day.

Its vengeful temper pleased her well,
  Its firmness, strength and ire;—
She loved on gruesome thoughts to dwell
  Around the bright lodge-fire.

Whenever she began a tale
  The tribe would gather round;
Ere half was told a woe-born wail
  Would make the forests sound.

She knew the legends of the past
  As no one else knew them;
She gathered them, until, at last,
  She merely lived for them.

Mawaha's hair is black as coal,
  But shrivelled is her skin;
Her eye spies out a beaver's hole
  Before her youngest kin.

Though bent and doubled up with age,
  She chants the wild war-songs;
And in her maddened, blinded rage
  Her body strikes with thongs.

Upon the foe she charges then
  And taunts him to the fight;
"What coward braves are Huron men,
  Just see them run from fright."

And then she takes deliberate aim,
  And throws a stone that kills;
All Huron breasts are filled with shame,
  Mawaha's deed instils.

The storm of battle rages then
  With fury—to the death;
Mawaha, fighting with the men,
  Is oft hard pressed for breath.

When thus Mawaha leads the fray
The Iroquois *must* win;
But only courage saves the day
And oh! the ranks are thin!

She leads the mourning, leads the wail,—
Chief mourner of her tribe;—
For nights until the sun rays pale
Their daily rounds describe.

At sunrise gaunt Mawaha bows
Her aged, wrinkled head;
Then, rising, gravely feeds her cows
And bakes the morning's bread.

At noontide when the sun is high
She cooks the mid-day meal;
And watches with forbidding eye
The dog's attempt to steal.

At eventide, when stars are out,
Before the camp-fire's blaze,
While friends and kindred sit about,
She treads tradition's maze.

One night before her tent she nods
And mutters half unheard:
"I curse the spot the Huron trods,
His truth is but a word.

The Hurons fight, as snakes might fight
That creep up to their prey;
Or wolves that prowl about at night
But shun the light of day.

They see our braves depart for game,
And think we cannot wield
The battle axe and lance the same
As braves that never yield.

Oh yes! They fight papoose and squaw
With fearless mien and heart;—
In Huron's worst defeat I saw
We took an active part."

A Huron cometh from behind;
From every bush he peers.
He cometh with the evening wind
And every word he hears.

His swarthy face grows darker still
And fiercer burns his hate;
But training brings an iron will
That teaches how to wait.

Mawaha nods, Mawaha dreams
By lodge-fire's fitful light;
A bowstring twangs, an arrow gleams
One instant in the night.

Mawaha stares into her fire
She cares not for her breath;
Her wrinkled face is full of ire
And bears the stamp of death.

She chaunts the death song of her race
In solemn, stately tones;
While friends are gathering round apace
Who fill the dark with groans.

Mawaha sings, as stars arise,
And shadows deeper grow:—
"The Iroquois are great and wise,
And brave they are, I know."

And when the sun shines o'er the land:—
"They win the wars they wage;
And none from coward Huron band
Dare tempt our sachem's rage."

And when the afternoon is late,
To those who stand around:—
"The Huron race, I hate!!"
And sought the Hunting Ground.

The gaunt face painted blue and pink,
The hair in tresses done,
With food to eat and drink to drink
And eyes to the setting sun;—

They buried her at dead of night
Where murmuring maples moan;
They built a camp fire then to light
The long way and the lone!

NATURAL BRIDGE.

(Columbia River Indians.)

The last seer speaks:

Behold the sun, a blood red ball,
Stands in dark skies whence woe shall fall;
For Manitou has hid his face
From this great land and greater race.

Oh, sons of men, what direful fate!
In long procession every state
With war chief, squaw and painted brave
Goes onward to its unearned grave.

On that great bridge of earth and stone
Depends the nation's life alone.
And Manitou has wisely said:
"When this bridge falls the race is dead!"

The bridge still stands but, men, beware
Lest in its stead stand empty air;
Tempt not the power of Manitou—
The bridge might fall and with it you.

The secret of the bridge is mine
I know each fissure, love each line.
But Manitou forbade me act
If I descried the bridge was cracked !

I bid farewell to you this day,
Like yonder sky my hair is grey.
Like birds of omen my voice calls
To warn—Too late ! The bridge, men, falls !

A MENOMINI TOTEM TALE.

(*Green Bay.*)

At Minikanisepe in Menomini land
The Mighty Maker fashioned Manittos on each hand.

He gave them form of mammal, he gave them form of bird,
They were most vicious monsters—of worse none ever heard.

They lived in night perpetual, beneath the earth entombed,
And there to evil doing they were forever doomed.

The last that he gave life to were called the Thunderers;
They are the crows and eagles, and neither of them stirs,

Unless the Unseen Eagle, their chieftain,
bids them go,
And then they do his bidding, as Golden
Eagles know.

But Manitou the Mighty forgot the Bear
was there—
And gave him his permission to say what
form he'd wear.

The Bear replied right promptly he would
be glad to be
What Manitou in wisdom should wisely
make decree.

And when Great Spirit heard this at once
he formed a plan,
The Bear should for his wisdom be made an
Indian man.

But he was light of color, and he was lithe
of limb
And that's the way Great Spirit at once
rewarded him.

At Minikanisepe, the Indian race appeared;
For there the Bear crawled upward, and through the earth's crust peered.

And lo! he kept on crawling till on the earth he stood
And found him by the lakeside within a great, dark wood.

He felt so very lonely he called the Eagle then,
"Come, Eagle, be my brother; be of the race of men."

The Eagle came and answered, "Your brother I will be."
And both then wanted greatly one to make them three.

And while they talked it over, the Beaver came along,
And asked to be made one of the Thunderers so strong.

But since he was a woman he could not be admitted
Except as Younger Brother—and this they straight permitted.

When next the Bear and Eagle stood on the river shore,
They saw the Sturgeon swimming, recrossing o'er and o'er.

And him the Bear adopted as servant and young Brother;
The Eagle claimed the Moose as had the Bear the other.

And all of these had taken the shape of native man.
At Minikanisepe was born the Indian.

THE LEGEND OF WINONA.

(*A Tale of the Water Gap.*)

Slumbering softly,
Rocked in the branches
Of an old oak tree,
Dreams a woodpecker.
Soon he awakens,
Looks all about him
Calling his mate.
"Pray, have you ever
Heard of the legend
Told of Winona—
Pride of the Delawares?"
Was his first question
When he had found her.
"No? Well then, listen."

"There at your right hand,
Where that great cliff is,
Deathward Winona
Leaped from the Hurons.

Know too, sweet singer,
There was a warrior,
Bravest of young men,
Loved by Winona;
Called by his people,
'Friend of Winona'
And 'Scourge of the Hurons,'
Called by Winona
'Wielder of Thunder.'
Caught on the warpath
Because he forsook not
Wounded companions,
Twenty dead Hurons
Lay on the earth there
Ere he was captured.
Numbers o'ercame him.
Bound were his fore-arms;
Tortures awaited
The foe of the Hurons.
Squaws and young maidens
Cursed and reviled him.
Had he not rendered
Headless their lodges ?

Had he not conquered
Hurons unnumbered ?
Had he not killed him,
Greatest of sachems,
Fiercest Tahawus ?
Now that they had him
Vengeance they sought for.
How could they cause him
Pain, the severest,
Such as would bring forth
Prayers for mercy,
Which they could mock at,
Laugh at and scorn at.

Far down below them
Lay the swift river,
Serpent-like coiling
From mountain to mountain;
Forming an island
With its great elbows.
Swift was the current,
Swifter than any
Indian runner.

There on the island
Safe from the Hurons,
During the day time
Camped their fierce foemen.
But when the twilight
Came from the mountains,
Then they drew backward,
Crossing the river,
Seeking for shelter
Tammany's forests.
From where were gathered
Huron's great chieftains,
Meeting in Council,
Planning the death blow
To those on the island,
Plainly were seen the
Forces there stationed:
Delaware forces.
Over the river
Tammany's forests,
Teeming with foemen,
Seemed in the distance,
Smoke from a camp fire;

Curling, first skyward,
Then, meeting the breezes,
Drifting in wavy
Lines to the zenith.

Scourge of the Hurons,
Delaware's bravest,
Crossed from the island
Towards the Hurons.
Glowing with courage,
Eager for battle,
Came five companions—
Each a fierce foeman,
Each fearless, firm hearted.

Cautiously creeping,
Sheltered by brushwood,
Gained they the summit—
The Hurons' encampment.
Here were they first seen,
Struck at and wounded.
Friend of Winona
Alone was uninjured.
High was his courage,

Strong was his bow-arm,
Sure was his shooting.
But unavailing
Was his resistance.
Capture meant torture
To Scourge of the Hurons.

All unbeknown to
Friend or to mother,
Radiant Winona
Followed her lover.
Followed him shoreward,
Parting the waters
With her bare bosom,
Kissing the waters
With her sweet lips. Then,
When through the brushwood,
Her lover ascended
Up to the summit,
Brown breasted Winona
Followed her lover,
Onwards and upwards.
Hid in a cavern
Close to the summit.

Watched his brave fighting,
Knew his great danger,
Counted his foemen;
Counted besides these
The paths from the summit.
Heard all the sachems
Planning the capture
Of Delaware's strong-holds.
Heard how at midnight
When bare was the island
Of hostile defenders,
Huron's strong warriors
Leaving their summit,
Crossing the foaming,
Impetuous current,
Should capture the island;
Keeping through daylight
Delaware forces
Far from their strong-hold.
Then in the night time,
Leaving the island,
Swimming the river,
Gaining the forest

On Tammany's shore line,
Were they to hunt them
Just as the lions
Found on the mountain.
Death was the measure
Meted each foeman.

Scourge of the Hurons
Was bound to an oak tree,
Wood piled about him,
Set fire to, and fed well.
Arrows were aimed at,
Javelins struck him,
Tomahawks grazed him—
Yet never complained he,
Loved by Winona.

Winona beholding
All this great torture,
Stifled her sobbing
From love for her people,
Waiting till twilight
Ere she crept slowly
Out of her cavern.

Close by her lover.
Touching him almost.
Passed sad Winona.
"Scourge of the Hurons."
Whispered the maiden
Under her closed lips.
"Fear not Winona!
Courage, my chieftain.
Saved are thy people,
Lest thy Winona
Meet with the Hurons!"
Cutting the deer thongs
Binding him tightly,
Swiftly she passed then
Into the forest,
Hastening greatly
Her faltering footsteps.
When swift Winona
Had come to the ledge here
Signals she made then
Having a meaning
Only to kinsmen.

Down on the island
Friends were a-stirring,
Searching for signs from
Wielder of Thunder,
Scourge of the Hurons,
Friend of Winona.
When they espied them,
Wonder o'erwhelmed them.
Still they decided
To feign a retreat;
Leading the Hurons,
Sure of succeeding,
Into an ambush,
Coming at midnight
Themselves to recapture
The island, their strong-hold.

Hurons ne'er dreamed that
Wielder of Thunder
Thong-bound no longer,
Was freed by Winona.
Hastily searching
For the offender

Some of them met with
Fleeing Winona.
But Wielder of Thunder's
Beloved lost not
Time on her mission—
Checked not by orders,
Nor arrows of Hurons,
Downward descended
Eager Winona.
Followed by Hurons
Close on her foot prints.
Numerous Hurons
Coming behind her,
Blocked her retreating.

Cliffs lay before her
Seemingly asking
Death for Winona.
Right to the edge of
One of the greatest
Drove they Winona,
Crowding her forward.
Cursing the Hurons

Winona leaped downwards
Cheating her foemen
Out of their victim;
For no one dared follow.
Scourge of the Hurons
Knew not who freed him.
But he fought nobly
Spite of his tortures,
Falling in battle
There on the summit,
There midst the wigwams
Of Delaware's foemen.

Up from the island,
Just as the sun set,
Saw they the death leap
Of beauteous Winona—
Pride of the Delawares.

The Father of Oak trees
Stood, with his branches
Towering skyward,
Midway between the
Summit and valley.

Seeing Winona
Leap from the Hurons,
Knowing that fragments
Only would tell the
Fate of the maid to
Those in the valley,
Loving her beauty,
He, in his anguish,
Sought to protect
Her body forever.
He caught in his arms
Falling Winona,
Cradling her softly
Mid vines and mid branches
After the custom
Of her own people.

Beauteous Winona
Lives in the legend
Told of the cliff where
Deathward she sprang
Saving her people.

CHIEF TOM.

(Wetauget)

No braves had he to do his will,
But Chieftain Tom his name was still,
He lay slow dying on the hill
Where his fathers met.

"Death? Need I, Chief Tom, fear death?
No tribe have I—not one who saith
My song of war beneath his breath,
But I am Chief Tom yet.

"Not one to bury me aright,
To fire the torch my soul to light
Into the Valley of the Night,—
Thither my face is set.

"Not one to braid my glossy hair,
To paint my face in colors rare,
To give me food with souls to share
On the pathway met.

"Not one to place the bow in hand,
To signal with the burning brand
That Chieftain Tom has left the band:—
'Let the tribes be met.'

"Not one to bring my aged steed,
Upon whose back the war-like deed
I did—In vain the white men plead
For mercy.—I forget!

"Not one of those that bury me
Love Washaning, as I love thee.
Here was I born—so thou shalt see
His tribe and Chief Tom met."

Chief Tom died then; the white men came
And buried him beneath the flame
Of burning brands, and as became
The last of the Wetauget.

HOW BLACK HAWK MET HIS ENEMIES.

Upon the Mississippi's bank
  Black Hawk, the Chieftain stood.
He cast his eyes up stream and down
  Then backwards to the wood.

No living thing, nor man nor beast,
  Crossed Black Hawk's sight that day,
Until the country round about
  In midnight shadows lay.

Then furtively a light canoe
  Its nose thrust up the stream;
And furtively a light canoe
  Downglided like a dream.

Hardly a paddle's length from shore
  The two canoes were kept;
Thus nearer came the chieftain's foes
  While other foemen slept.

Upon the bank Black Hawk kept watch
An arrow at his bow—
And other arrows at his belt
Were waiting for the foe.

His tomahawk and scalping knife
Within his belt he wore,
As by the river's flood he stood
To greet the foes it bore.

They hated each the other one,
That floated on the flood,
For they were braves of hostile tribes
That oft had shed their blood.

But both had vowed Black Hawk should die,
And both were warriors true,
And while on vengeance thus they went
Their hate they could subdue.

They knew that one alone could not
Black Hawk in battle slay;
An ally each in other found,
And plotted night and day.

And, secretly they left at dusk
The war host of the chief;
Each going by a different way,
Each going to his grief.

For Black Hawk knew how traitors looked,
And knew his faithful braves,
Whom he could trust by day or night,
For they were men, not slaves.

But these were aliens to his race,
Adopted sons of squaws
To take the place of those that fell
In battle for the cause.

They hated him with reason too,
For that he slew their kin,
For that they two of all their tribes
Lived through the battle's din.

What cared they, that their lives were spared?
Their friends for vengeance cried:—
Their souls called from the spirit land
"Send Black Hawk to our side!"

"Yes, Brothers, we shall bide our time;
But Black Hawk ye shall greet."
They said; and never knew that he
Watched them with mind discreet.

He knew the treason of their hearts,
And read their plan aright,
He saw, although they thought he slept,
Their going hence that night.

He waited thus, prepared to slay,
Within the midnight shade
When one canoe came drifting down
And noisy paddling made.

The chief stirred not, but thought "'Tis strange,
There should be two canoes;
That awkward paddling which I hear,
Is sure to be a ruse!"

He shot an arrow through the brush
So that the branches stirred,
And soon two answering arrows sped,
Black Hawk said not a word.

He knew now where the second was;
That both lay in the shade;
And planned to lure them both beyond,
To where the moonbeams played.

So up the bank he shot again,
Beyond the shadow line,
Again two answering arrows sped,
And struck in bright moon-shine.

Ah, then the two canoes appeared
Out in the open stream;
And Black Hawk's bow in shadow twanging
Twice sent feathered gleam.

And twice a gurgling groan appalled
The Mississippi River,
Twice a shout of triumph rang
Upon a last death quiver.

Silence then until a splash
Reveals a swimmer near;
He cleaves the waters with his breast
As birds the atmosphere.

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He grips the first canoe with speed
And leaning o'er its side,
Like to a panther on its prey
He drifts there with the tide.

To the second then he swims
With the blood red hand,
Cuts the scalp and leaves them there
While he swims to land.

Then he sleeps and knows henceforth
Black Hawk in peace shall sleep;
O'er the traitors' ghastly faces,
Manittoes vigil keep.

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